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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park announced an \$89,000 Assistance to Firefighters Grant awarded to the Highwood Fire Department.

The money will be used to upgrade the exhaust system in the station, replace basic tools and fire equipment, and replace two defibrillators.

"As our towns become busier and our population increases, the need to have modern equipment that better protects our residents becomes greater," said Kirk. "This grant serves two purposes; protecting the health and safety of our firefighters and upgrading life saving equipment for Highwood residents.

"I thank the Department of Homeland Security for recognizing the needs of our first responders in Highwood."

A new hose, nozzles, utility ropes and self-contained breathing apparatuses are some of the equipment being upgraded with funds from this grant. Installation of a new exhaust system will better protect Highwood firefighters from the hazards of apparatus exhaust. An inadequate exhaust system is currently operating at the station, allowing dangerously high exhaust levels to persist throughout the station. Purchasing two new defibrillators will replace two outdated ones that ride in an ambulance and fire truck.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Domestic Preparedness in cooperation with the Department's United States Fire Administration.